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## **Rural and Tribal Economic Development Training Now Available Through Commerce**

(HELENA) – The Montana Department of Commerce is now offering economic development training specifically designed for rural settings and tribal economies through its Business Resources Division. The Montana-specific training is called, “HomeTown Competitiveness and Sustaining Success in Tribal Economic Development,” and is a combined course targeted toward rural towns and reservation communities facing economic distress.

“Rural and tribal economic development training is a valuable opportunity for tribal planners, economic development specialists and small town leaders to discuss the great potential that lies in rural Montana,” Governor Brian Schweitzer said. “We’re inviting everyone to come to the table to discuss the direction our rural communities should be going and the steps needed to get there.”

“Montana’s reservation and non-reservation communities must build upon their assets to prosper economically and to sustain that prosperity,” Commerce Director Anthony Preite said. “Rural towns and reservation towns have an unlimited opportunity to use this training to capitalize on existing and familiar resources.”

Heartland Center for Leadership Development of Lincoln, Nebraska will present the training. Heartland focuses on leadership training, citizen/tribal participation, community planning and facilitation while acknowledging the critical role played by local leadership as tribes, communities and organizations build capacity for sustainable development. Heartland is recognized internationally as an innovator of creative strategies for

community revitalization especially in rural settings.

Co-sponsors include Opportunity Link and the National Tribal Development Association. Havre-based Opportunity Link works to reduce poverty in eleven Montana counties that include three reservations and the currently-landless Little Shell Chippewa Tribe. The Rocky Boy's agency-based National Tribal Development Association's vision is to educate tribal decision-makers and business leaders about the need to create investor friendly business on reservations throughout the United States.

"HomeTown Competitiveness and Sustaining Success in Tribal Economic Development" has been designed for economic development specialists, small town leaders, tribal economic development specialists and tribal planners. The combined courses will be held September 11-13, 2007 in Great Falls.

Contact Fran Viereck, Tribal Business Development Officer, Business Resources Division, Department of Commerce, at 406-841-2736 or [fviereck@mt.gov](mailto:fviereck@mt.gov) for specific questions.

More information can be found on the web at: [www.heartlandcenter.info](http://www.heartlandcenter.info)

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